

February 14th, 2023

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Madison Mackay, and I am a resident of Hamden, CT. I stand in support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status. Expanding access to HUSKY regardless of immigration status is an essential step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 26; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals have access to health coverage.

I grew up in Connecticut and recently started the position of Referral Specialist at the organization Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services, where I work to provide services to our undocumented neighbors. I listen to stories on the phone everyday from people navigating their new lives in the United States. I ask clients why they came here and what type of help they need. They want to work, to get an apartment, and to support themselves. But these goals of self sufficiency are impossible to accomplish if they or their children are sick, with no resources to help them.

My immediate family are US citizens, but we have experienced the struggle of limited healthcare. When my oldest brother was younger, my parents relied on Husky for his healthcare. They couldn't afford medical care. They were only 22 years old, living in their friends houses or in their car. HUSKY allowed them to take care of their child and focus on finding a sustainable job and place to live. They accomplished that goal and more. As US citizens, my parents did not have to add on the burden of immigration to their daily life. The stress of immigration and the fear of deportation makes the path to self sufficiency even more difficult. I know how this program has helped my family, and I have heard testimonies from immigrants without status in my community who desperately need this assistance. We must expand access to HUSKY to make Connecticut a better place and to improve the lives of our community members.

I support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Madison MacKay